

CONTACT:

GIVE NEW LIFE TO YOUR OLD GADGETS

Did you get a fun, new electronic gadget for the holidays? If it replaced an old one, did you know you can recycle the old one instead of just throwing it away?

Electronic devices account for up to 5 percent of landfill space, but they contribute 70 percent of the heavy metals found in landfills, including 40 percent of the lead. Metals from electronic gadgets can accidentally leach from landfills and contaminate surrounding soil and nearby water sources. Many computer plastics and circuit boards contain brominated flame-retardants, which are suspected of bio-accumulating in animals and fish – and causing health problems for people who eat those animals and fish.

It's estimated that there are 500 million obsolete computers in the United States, and 130 million cell phones are discarded annually. In 2005 alone, 5.2 billion pounds of electronics waste were generated, but less than 13 percent was recycled.

The materials in electronics equipment are valuable and can be reused in new electronics or other products. Most components can be recycled at locations around Massachusetts.

You can also check with the manufacturer of the device to see if it has a recycling program. iPods, for instance, can be recycled anywhere they are sold, and Apple will give a 10 percent discount on a new iPod bought the same day. Apple, Dell, IBM, Hewlett-Packard and other manufacturers accept computers, monitors, and their components for recycling.

Finally, instead of recycling your used electronic equipment, consider donating it to someone who could use it. Many non-profit organizations and schools accept donated computers, printers, or other electronic equipment.

If you are a games enthusiast, many stores that sell games will accept used ones for resale. Or, swap them with a friend who has grown tired of his games.

So enjoy your new toys, but do something good with the old ones!

-###-